



Which Captain John Smith's 1612 Map Is This?

That's a hard question to answer, because there were many different versions of Captain John Smith's popular map of Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay. Dr. Stephen R. Potter, archaeologist for the National Park Service National Capital Region, provides the following explanation. He credits the principal source for information about Smith's 1612 map to "Smith's Virginia and Its Derivatives" by Prof. Coolie Verner, published as No. 45 in the Map Collectors' Circle, 1968.

The first printing of Smith's Map of Virginia, from the copper plate engraved by William Hole, was in 1612, referred to here as the Smith/Hole map. Each change or modification to the original copper plate resulted in a new "state" of the map. From its first printing in 1612 to its last in 1632, there were, according to Coolie Verner, 12 states of the Smith/Hole map. Although all of the versions show markings for latitude across the top and bottom edges, State IV of the map is the first to show longitude along the sides. Copies of State IV of the Smith/Hole map have been found in both Captain John Smith's pamphlet *A Map of Virginia: With a Description of the Countrey, the Commodities, People, Government and Religion*, printed in 1612, and *The Generall History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*, printed in 1624.

The numbers in the top corners of some of the Smith/Hole maps are not dates. They are page numbers. In the 1625 printing of Samuel Purchas's *Purchas, his Pilgrimage*, page numbers 1692 and 1693 have been added to the upper left and right corners (making this State VII of the Smith/Hole map). In State X of the map, the Purchas page numbers are "corrected" to read 1690 on the left rather than 1692, and 1691 on the right instead of 1693. (The Smith/Hole map was most commonly bound in pamphlets or books, with half of the map being the left page and the other half being the right).

In addition to the various states of the Smith/Hole map printed from 1612 to 1632, there were nine derivative maps--maps copied from the Smith/Hole map by other cartographers and/or map publishers. These derivatives, which are not exact copies of the Smith/Hole original but are based on it, began with a copper plate engraving by Jodocus Hondius, Jr., printed in 1618, and ended in 1710, with the final printing of another derivative map that started back in 1630. From the first printing in 1612 to the last, nearly a century later, European printings of Captain John Smith's map continued to be used to promote exploration and travel to America.

Two versions of Smith's 1612 map are used on the National Park Service website for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail: State VI with the Library of Congress imprint and State VII with the 1692 and 1693 page numbers. Because the different states were used in different publications, it is often very difficult to put precise dates on some of the individual copies. A very rare first state of the Smith/Hole map (which does not show longitude) can be viewed at Jamestown Settlement near Williamsburg, Virginia.